4: Hobley G-5 (ca. 1900) 1902 FL11 Luo FL11

Their huts are very similar to those of the Bantu Kavirondo, but they are a trifle lower, and are generally built solely of reeds (*mabwa*). The huts are dug out inside to a depth of 18 inches or 2 feet; the hut is plastered with the earth dug out from the interior. 342

There are two fire-places in each hut, and the customs previously enumerated about stopping at the first or second cooking place are the same as among the Bantu Kavirondo. 357

Young girls sleep in a hut with the other girls of the village in the care of an old woman. The boys of the village sleep in a hut by themselves. The villages are roughly circular. The huts are not arranged in any particular order, but the huts of one man are generally side by side. The huts of the young men are usually near the gates, and they are supposed to watch the gates in case of any attempt being made to steal the cattle. 513 361 383

On entering a village the hut directly opposite the gate is generally the hut of the principal wife of the headman of the village, or the headman of that part of the village. 361

Food products.—Mtama, sweet potatoes, a little wimbi, Indian corn, and also pumpkins, sesamum, and pulse (*pojo*). Bananas are occasionally grown, but they do not flourish, as the country is a little too dry for them. A little tobacco and Indian hemp are grown. The Indian corn is not ground but generally eaten in an unripe state. 241

Ironwork.—They do not smelt iron, neither do they forge their hoes, which are all imported from Ikamia. They however forge spears, knives, bill hooks, axes, etc., from Ikamia iron. Among the Gomi tribe only people belonging to a clan called Uvino forge iron; the smiths are called Yethet-th. A rough kind of salt is made from the ashes of reeds and grass, and salt is also imported from Kisingiri. 325 439 258

Death customs.—When a person dies the body is immediately taken out of the house. Upon the death of a woman the brothers-in-law of the deceased dig the grave in the verandah of the house of the deceased; the corpse is buried on its left side with the hand under the head; the body is doubled up. A man, on the contrary, is buried on his right side with the hand under the head. In the case of a woman her relations and friends come and wail; her husband presents each clan that attends with a goat, the mourners stay three days. 764

The hut in which a person has died is used for a month; the neighbours then meet and drink beer, and the house is broken down. Upon the death of a man his brother digs his grave; if the first wife he married is still alive he is buried in her house; if she is dead the man is buried in the verandah of the hut in which he died. 765

Men only wail for one day, after that only women wail; the women wail for the whole of the first three days; after that the women of the village wail at dawn for fifteen days.

Signs of mourning.—Women wear a string of banana fibre round the forehead, they also wear a tail of white strings for about a month; the tail usually

4: Hobley G-5 (ca. 1900) 1902 FL11 Loo FL11

526 *Games.*—They play a kind of *bao* with sixteen holes; they put three small stones in each hole. The boys play a kind of hockey with a wooden ball.

727 Upon return from war about two out of every three cattle go to the *chief*; the *chief* then divides his share of the cattle with his brothers, and a man who has distinguished himself in war is given a reward of cattle by the *chief*. A man who distinguishes himself in war is also often given a wife without payment.

240 *Food, etc.*—They eat practically all meat except that of the hyæna. Some young men eat leopard meat to make them brave in fighting; the meat of a serval cat is not eaten. The women do not eat fowls; some women do not eat sheep and eggs; some eat hippopotamus meat, some not; women do not drink milk, but eat it cooked with food. They have a curious custom of mixing cow's urine with the milk of the cow; the urine is allowed to stand a day or two to increase its flavour; they say it increases the amount of the butter and gives it a nice flavour, and it is moreover supposed to have a medicinal effect. The crested crane (*Balearica pillericeps*) is never killed or eaten by these people.

[222, 223]

752, 757 *Medicine, etc.*—They pierce the chest until the lung is reached for chest complaints, and they even sometimes cut a small piece out of the lung through the aperture. They have medicine for wounds and for arrow poison, also for abscess and for purging, but not for diarrhœa. They also have medicine to avoid a threatened miscarriage. They profess to have a certain antidote for snake poison.* Venereal disease is practically unknown among the Ja-Luo.

[64]

791 *Before going to war* they often eat the outer seed case of a certain tree, and this is supposed to ensure their return unwounded; it is called *Odede*.

728 *Peace ceremonies.*—They kill a sheep and put part of it into a wooden mortar used for crushing grain, and the representative of each side takes out a piece and gives it to the opposite side. An old man from the side that is beaten will go to the village of the *chief* of the enemy and proceed to sweep up the cattle boma; this will be accepted as a sign of submission.

270 *Killing animals for food.*—They kill cows by sticking a knife into the jugular vein; the head of the beast must be pointed to the west during the operation. Sheep and goats are killed the same way. Fowls are strangled.

428, 748 *Succession customs, etc.*—When a man dies the property goes to the brother if the children are small; if the eldest son is grown up he takes the property and gives his brothers a share; but a son is not allowed to take the amount paid by anyone who marries one of his sisters; this amount all goes to the father's brother. The brother of the deceased takes the wives, but the eldest son will probably take the youngest wife of his deceased father.

* After considerable difficulty I obtained specimens of the plants said to be used as antidotes for snake poison, and Dr. Scully, of the Botanical Department, British Museum, has kindly identified the plants for me. One plant, named *Physalanus Alyssinica*, is used internally, an infusion being made from the leaves. The other plant, *Leonus palmatus*, is used externally, a plaster of the macerated leaves being placed on the wound. I have not been able to discover the physiological action of these plants.

11: Hartmann M-5 (ca. 1928) 1928 FL11 Luo FL11

with their bullsh-kick-shields and spears singing all the time. Meanwhile the 765
heads of all the people of deceased's kraal except his wives are being shaven clean, [302]
while for this purpose they, in turn, are seated on a log of a three-tree which is
put across the main path leading to the village.

On the third day a billy-goat is killed and the meat is cooked and eaten by
the women and girls of the kraal only, and an old woman gets the skin of the goat
as a new skirt.

On the 4th day the relations go to the grave again and sweep it (*yeye lot*)
with a special kind of grass, putting some earth of the grave in an old basket. This [513]
is put in the middle of the path leading to the village, together with the leg of wood
(*orindo*) which deceased used to rest his head on when sleeping. Nobody will after-
wards touch these 2 articles; they are left there in the middle of the path. People
will in future go past them, making a curve round them. — This explains why
one very seldom finds a straight path leading to a kraal. — The hoe, which was
used in digging the grave, is given to an old woman of an other part of the di-
strict, but the hoe handle is thrown away. Then all the relations living away from
the kraal, and all the neighbours go home.

When they have gone, the stick on top of the deceased hut, and then on the
huts of all his women are broken by the grandchild of deceased or by some other
small boy. This is a sign to anybody that the occupants of these huts are mourning.

After about two months the wives of deceased go to the village of their parents
where they stay for two days, and a young bull is killed for them in honour of
deceased. Before the wives have been home, they are not allowed to step any-
where but in the deceased husband's village, except under extraordinary circum-
stances, e. g. if a woman is not able to cross a river on the way home; in such [842]
cases she may sleep in another village, but only in the hut of an old woman. If
she would break this rule, then the woman in whose hut she slept would not bring
forth any children.

Yet another hoe dance is drawn for all the relations and neighbours, who
come by the occasion. That day the grave is smeared with mud (mwanu lot) and
the women get their heads shaven for the first time since the death of their hus-
band. Now also all the wives of deceased are dispersed of, they go to either the
brothers or the cousins of their former husband. The time of mourning is finished
and the sticks are replaced on top of the huts by the same boy who broke down all.
That night however the women sleep on the bare ground. That day the women
wear new white beads on their necks. These beads are made on wood from the [291]
central marrow of papyrus stalks or of sisal fibre. For since the death of their
husband they have left off their ordinary beads, which they replaced by a more
convenient one, made of the fibrous bark of the wild figtree.

There new huts are built for the women, if their new husbands live in 768 ●
another village, and when these are ready their former huts are broken down. If 767
their new husbands live in the same kraal they keep their own huts, except if deceased 753
was buried inside his hut. In this case a new hut is built and the old one is allowed
to collapse over the grave. If deceased was buried in a little hut built over grave,
then this hut is left till it tumbles down by itself. When later on somebody goes

11: Hartmann M-5 (ca. 1920)1928 FL11 Loc FL11

769 769 753 sick in the village and he witchdoctor says that the sickness is due to neglect of deceased's grave, and that they have to sacrifice a goat or a bull to propitiate him, then they put some sticks round the grave again by way of a hut, in the doorway of which they roast a chicken, and some blood of the sacrifice is put in a potsherd and placed on the grave.

769 782 273 On the anniversary of the death or thereabouts beer is brewed again. First however deceased's son visits the witchdoctor, who tells him to sacrifice a special cock, e. g. a big black one, or one with an extra toe, or one with very short legs, ect. Until such a cock is found, as indicated by the witchdoctor, the beer will be of no use. Then the chicken is roasted and eaten, except for one leg which is put on the grave and covered with a basket. Now the *wimbi* for the beer is coarsely ground and put in pots for fermenting. After twelve days the fermented *wimbi* is roasted and the next morning dried. Unground *wimbi* is cooked in water, which is strained off again, and the grain remains for 3 days in covered pots in order to sprout, after which it is dried. When these ingredients are ready, then the next day another visit is paid to the witchdoctor, who again orders a special chicken to be sacrificed, this time e. g. a white one, which is killed and eaten in the morning. Now the [824 301] women and children of deceased only pick some seed-pods of a certain wild plant (*ochok*) which they string like beads on the stalk of creeping grass (*mutlume*). These strings they put round their necks, and also round the necks of the water-vessels with which they go to the well to fetch water for the further preparations of the beer. The water is put out in the sun, and when it has become lukewarm, it is poured on the fermented *wimbi* in big earthen pots. Next day the sprouted *wimbi* is ground and put in the kenyam too. The following morning early the relations put some of the beer, now ready, in a small vessel, which they put on the grave of deceased, with a reed in it, after which the people of the village take some of the beer and drink it. Presently they bring a cock which they suspend by its legs above in the gateway of the kraal together with some secret medicine, and it remains hanging there till sunset. From 8 o'clock in the morning onwards all the relations, friends and neighbours come to partake of the beer, which is put in an enormous earthen pot (*mbira*) in an open space outside, each visitor bringing his own reed for sucking the beer. Nobody can enter the kraal but day except by the gateway where the chicken is hanging, all the other entrances being closed up. And the chicken is hung in such a way that anyone entering has to touch it. Suppose a [754] person with an "evil eye" would enter for the purpose of bewitching somebody there, the medicine would start working on him, and he would leave the place with sore eyes, which would cause him much suffering. If this person, however, returns to the village, and owns up that he came there to bewitch somebody, he will be asked to spit on the ground, so that the person bewitched may not die, and doing so his eyes will heal again.

Beer is supplied to anybody entering the kraal for three days at a stretch. No food is cooked these days. If some food is brought from a neighbouring village they may take it but otherwise they live on beer only. All the children of round about, learn about the case of persons death and called after him are carried by their mothers on this first party. Each mother brings a cooked chicken and some

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der the head of manslaughter should be punished at all. They feel that a person who makes the mistake of killing in anger is or has been or will eventually be punished by the ancestors, God, the elements, by illness, bad luck, misfortune, or the like, in the inevitable nature of things.

It is believed that cold-blooded, premeditated murder brings *chiew* to the group and is therefore punished by the tribe or by the segment affected. The group or the individual who took what they regarded as this calculated risk was eventually banished from the tribe or if large and strong enough to dominate the political unit to which the deceased belonged could force his supporters, usually his segment of the clan, to break away and leave the area. Luo kinship describes all members of the clan in the same genealogical generation as brothers; fratricide, therefore, has a very wide range.

Luo clans occupy and are identified with a geographical area. The clan and the area it occupies are usually called after the eponym of the tribe. Those living within a clan or tribal area who are not members of the clan or tribe are regarded as squatters (*jodak*) with limited rights. They may be unrelated squatters, but most often are found to be affines of legitimate clan members. Murder committed by such persons invokes immediate counteraction on the part of those who belong to the land by virtue of descent, *jogwong*. Cattle could be taken by force, the culprit banished or killed, and/or a woman from that group married by a member of the dead man's minimal lineage, his *jokakwaro*, to raise seed unto the dead man's name. This woman would be regarded as the wife of the dead man, her children would placate his ghost as father (*wuoro*), the physical father would merely serve as genitor.

One major clan, *Kakia*, of a powerful tribe, the Sense of Central Nyanza, descended from a woman of this type—but then not exactly of this type: what happened was as follows. A *jodak*, living in the clan area of Sense, killed the son of an important elder of the tribe. He fled to his own tribal land to

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avoid the immediate consequences and as a result war broke out between the people of Seme and the people of his tribe, Ugenya. After many years of intermittent and bitter warfare the elders of both tribes met to settle the dispute. Their solution was as follows: because the elder who lost his son did not have an unmarried son to take a woman of the killer's clan, and because the killer's minimal lineage did not have a suitable daughter to give in marriage, it was decided that the killer should marry the daughter of the deceased's father, and through her raise seed to the dead man. The killer, contrary to custom but as part of the settlement, was forced to live at the home of his bride and was subsequently adopted into the clan of the deceased. It is interesting, however, that the eponym of the clan which today traces descent from this couple is the bride, Kia, and not the killer or the deceased. It is, to my knowledge, the only clan in Luo which has a woman as an eponym, but then she was apparently regarded as a male by her contemporaries.

This background was given to provide the reader with some idea of the Jokao attitude to homicide. Deeply ingrained is the notion that life goes on after death on earth—that ancestors in the spirit world are able to influence the lives, conduct, fortunes, for good or evil, of their descendants. Ghosts are more likely to be benevolent if they can count numerous descendants on earth and extremely malevolent if life on earth was cut short by violence or unnatural death by war, accident, or suicide. The ghosts of the latter are believed to be more difficult to deal with than those of ordinary spirits of old men or women. The more descendants a ghost has, the higher its status in the afterworld, and therefore the greater its pleasure and benevolence.

The Jokao had developed several devices to deal with cases of homicide. A wife could be married in the name of a murdered youth to raise seed to his name, to placate his spirit and to continue his line for posterity. A young adolescent woman who died was deflowered by a stranger (jokwaŋ)

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because a ghost of a virgin who has reached puberty was regarded as extremely dangerous. The defloration, still practiced in parts of Luo today, was regarded as satisfying her natural desire to bear children. 749 837 [809]

The spirits of warriors killed in battle were placated by the tribe as a whole in ceremonial and ritual held at the borders of the tribal land (*thim*) by *pere lolo* and *nyo buru*, where sacrifices were made and the tribal ancestors placated to welcome the ghost of the hero. The affair became a tribal responsibility, whereas normally death is regarded as a responsibility of the family or minor lineage segment. 766 769 [764]

A person who found the body of a man or of a woman would commence wailing as a closely related mourner. If the body turned out to be that of a person among whose clan the finder could marry, then a wife or husband was found for the finder in the belief that the spirit of the deceased planned and directed the discovery of the body to the end that the group of the finder should be united in marriage with that of the deceased. 728 745 583

Witches, if caught in the act of "running about at night," were killed instantly and with equanimity. The body of a person killed as a witch was mutilated by driving a stake into the rectum after which the body would be thrown into the village. An old custom still associated with this is the insistence of the relatives of a woman who died suddenly, or inexplicably, to examine her body for signs of having been a witch. Female witches are believed to be trained by their husbands to run at night with them and, because they are weaker, are frequently caught and killed. Bride-wealth may not be reclaimed or, if not finally paid, must be completed by her husband if a woman is killed under these circumstances. 754 683 [763] [583]

Accidental deaths are regarded as having been inspired by the ancestors, and therefore require placation of the spirit of the ancestor divined as having been responsible. Deaths from sickness are believed to come from many causes, the chief of 761 [769] [783]

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Finally, in desperation, his sons and a group of his *jokakwero* consulted the head diviner, *jabilo*, to choose an auspicious day for the killing of the ex-chief and to collect the animals and materials necessary for cleansing after the deed had been accomplished. 159 674 628

The ex-chief was found and stabbed to death at the place named by the *jabilo* and his body was hidden in a nearby river. It was found several days later, and a witness was found who alleged that he came upon the group on the day of the murder in the act of disposing of the body.

Those who had had actual physical contact with the blood of the murdered man were cleansed as soon as they arrived home by the leading *jabilo* of the clan. He used a grey ash from burning the sacred *bwombwe* vine. The minimal lineage, *jokakwero*, assembled at the village of the senior son, who was the head of the lineage segment, and who had struck the fatal blow. There the following cleansing ritual was performed: at about two o'clock the following afternoon, a black sheep and red chicken were slaughtered by the head of the lineage. The sheep and chicken were first prepared by the *jabilo*, who placed his medicines in the mouth of the sheep and of the chicken before the sacrifice. The *jabilo* cut strips of skin from the animal and wrapped them around the spear and knives used in the murder. The spear had to be destroyed at sundown because the victim was related to the spear clan of the tribe. The meat was divided on the lineage principle and consumed ceremonially. The meat of the chicken was eaten only by those who actually struck blows. 159 783 [824]

The purpose of these sacrifices was stated by the *jabilo* to "keep the spirit of the murdered man from doing evil to the clan." It also cleansed the bodies of those who drew blood so that they could now eat with their families and once more participate in the activities of the village and clan.

After the meat was eaten, those present hel[illegible]g to decide which old woman should act as a wife [illegible]cut of 159 768 769

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159 the murdered man, to mourn his death, to placate his spirit,
● 768 and to retain the grey ash medicine left over from the first
769 cleansing to be used when necessary to remove the danger of his ghost returning to harm members of the clan. An old woman past child bearing, *pim*, was selected and agreed to perform these functions. She was given animals for this service and a hut was built for her outside the village, where she placated the spirit of the dead man.

159 Most Joluo will agree that when a witch is killed, the dead
682 man's relatives do not take legal action but try to cover up the
759 incident. This is not difficult in Luo society. One case did, however, occur during the period of this study which could not be hidden from the authorities.

Case No. 2.

A youth of seventeen was escorting his sister from a marriage ceremony back to their village some miles away. It was late at night or early in the morning, time could not accurately be assessed, when suddenly an apparition appeared in the path of the couple. It was a naked man—swerving, jumping, screaming, and brandishing fire which glowed red as he waved his arms. The night was very dark and to the young couple the apparition appeared as a ghost. The woman fled the way she had come but the youth in his frantic effort to escape stumbled and fell. The "ghost" was on top of him instantly, clawing at his face and throat. The youth had a sheath knife in his belt and frantically struck out blindly several times as he managed to struggle free. He fled back to the village from which he came. A party of youths and men armed themselves and set out to search for and kill the witch but were unable to find the exact spot in the darkness.

159 Next morning a body was found, naked, and with several
662 stab wounds on it. The man was identified, and the finder,

21:Huxley Q, T-5 (no date) 1960 FL11 Luo FL11

telling the rice-growers they must make and maintain their own bunds. Last season the output jumped to 50,000 bags.

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We drove to Nyabondo across the Kano plains. No one loves these plains. They are not only flat, they are absolutely treeless, dry, cracked, windswept, overcrowded, dusty and mean. The soil is 'black cotton', an especially viscous clay in which any vehicle bogs down irrevocably in wet weather—very fertile potentially, but soul-destroying to work. 'The people are like their soil,' I was told. 'They break your heart and yet you go on trying, something's there.'

Everywhere are circles of a particular euphorbia, a dark-green, harsh, ugly plant that grows about eight feet tall and surrounds every group of huts. When a family head dies, his homestead is evacuated, his huts are left to rot away and only the euphorbia hedge remains, so the plains are covered with old circles as well as those in use. People have tried planting eucalyptus trees, but white ants eat them before they are man-high.

No individual cultivates his land in one piece. He digs or ploughs a patch here, a patch there, another bit over there, two more bits down the hill and a piece two miles off across the valley that belonged to his mother's uncle. This is known as fragmentation; it is almost universal among Bantu people, exists also among others such as the Luo, and is like a net spread for the feet of Progress in which he becomes enmeshed and stultified.

The first stage of land enclosure must be for every cultivator to exchange fragments with his neighbours, so that all his land is gathered together in one piece. It is the first stage and also the hardest; land is life's blood to the people; it is like exhorting men to exchange their blood, or their children. Suspicions dart out of their holes like bee-eaters. Won't so-and-so, my neighbour, get an unfair share? The bit he wants to swap for my piece is smaller. Give up my fertile patch by the river where bananas flourish for that barren stretch of hillside? Never! Somewhere there is a trick in all this. . . .